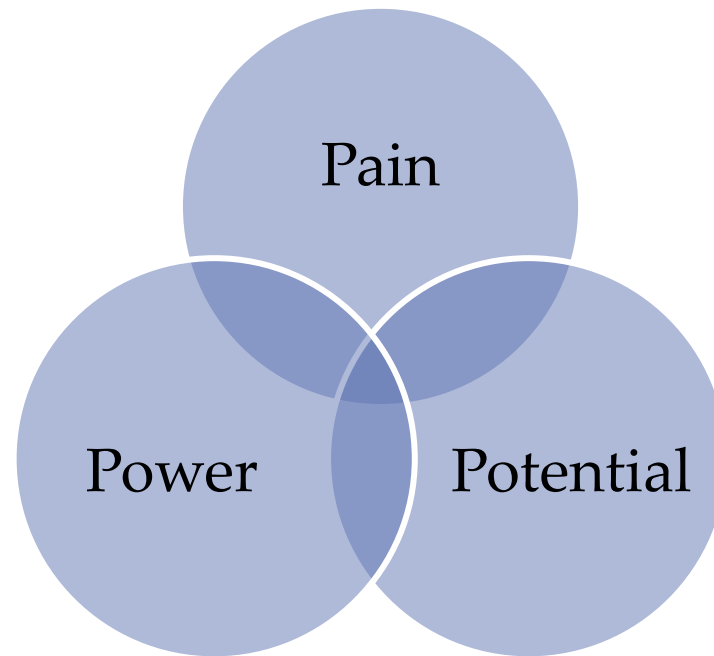


Contact When Children are Adopted from Care



Dr Beth Neil

The '**Contact after Adoption**' study: Face-to-face and indirect contact for children adopted < age 4.

A longitudinal study following adopted children 2, 6 and 16 years post placement (16 yr follow up in progress).

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/swp/research/centre/contactafteradoption>

The '**Supporting contact**' study: Face-to-face, agency mediated **contact**

- 55 adoptive parents
- 39 birth relatives

Neil *et al* 2011

The '**Helping birth families**' study

- 73 birth parents and grandparents in compulsory proceedings

Neil *et al* 2010

Issues of Pain



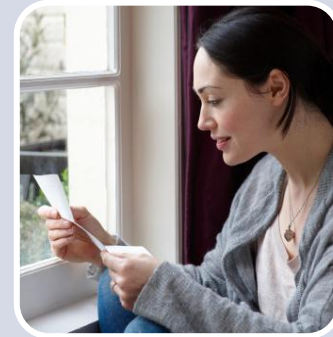
Child

- Abuse & neglect
- My 'story'
- Loss



Adoptive Parents

- The 'other' family
- Emotions about abuse
- Child's legacy



Birth Family

- Hostile process
- Loss
- Own history
- Complex needs

Power Issues Before Adoption



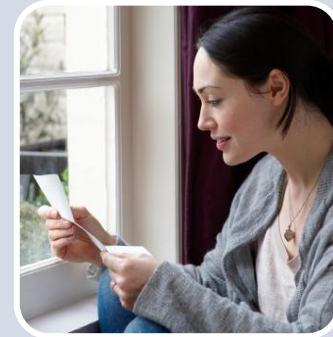
Child

- No voice
- Mixed feelings



Adoptive Parents

- Need approval
- A scarce resource



Birth Family

- Early exclusion from contact planning
- Shall I contest?

Power Issues After Adoption



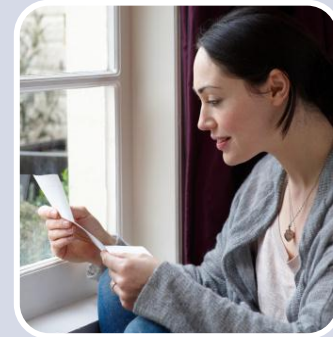
Child

- Changing views
- Assuming control



Adoptive Parents

- Managing risk and responsibility



Birth Family

- Being seen as a risk
- Not wanting to 'rock the boat'

The Potential of Contact



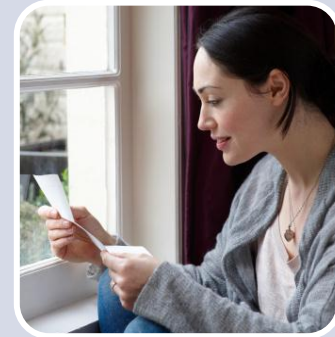
Child

- Questions
- People
- Openness



Adoptive Parents

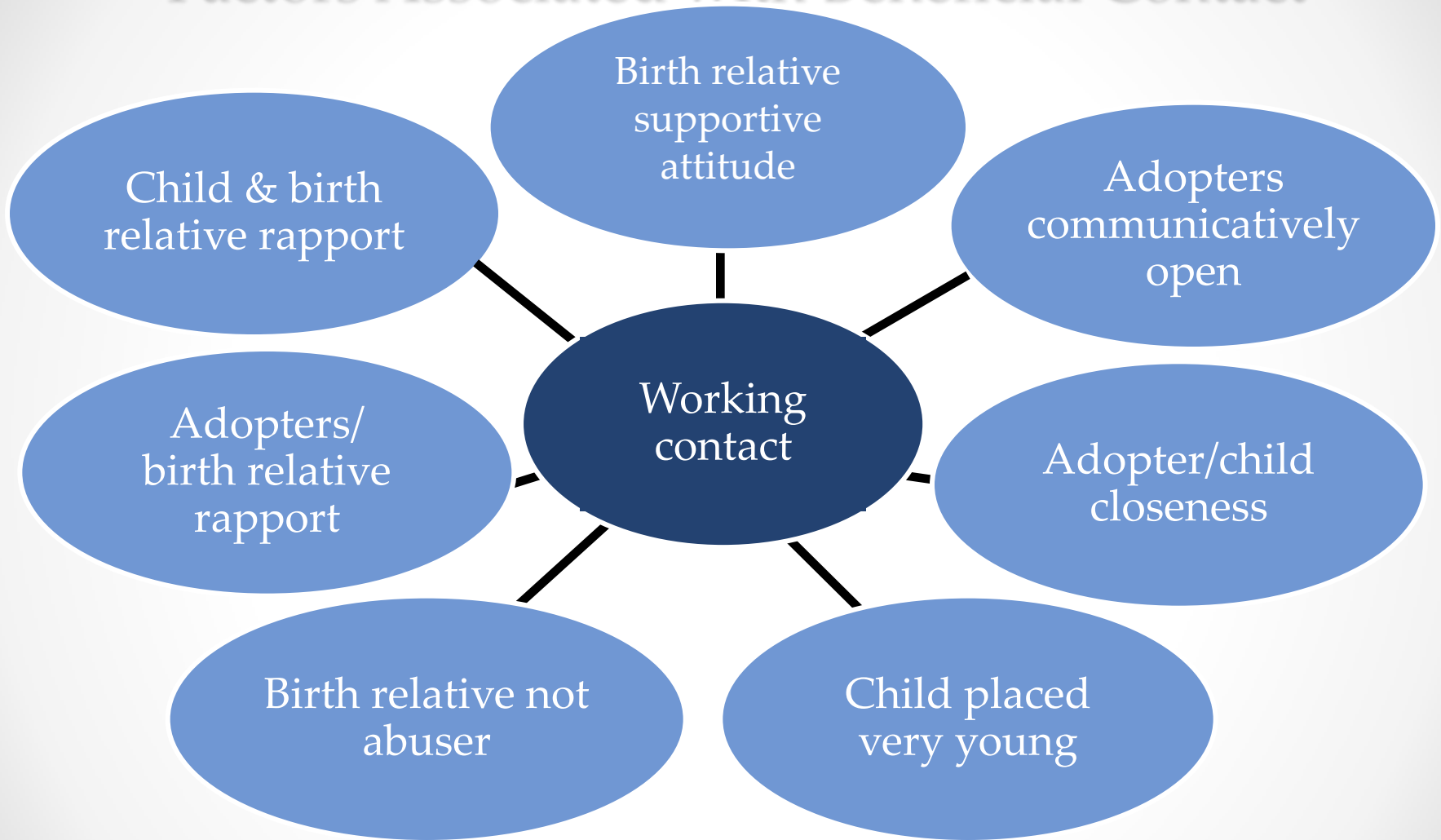
- Information
- Talking
- Anxieties
- Closeness



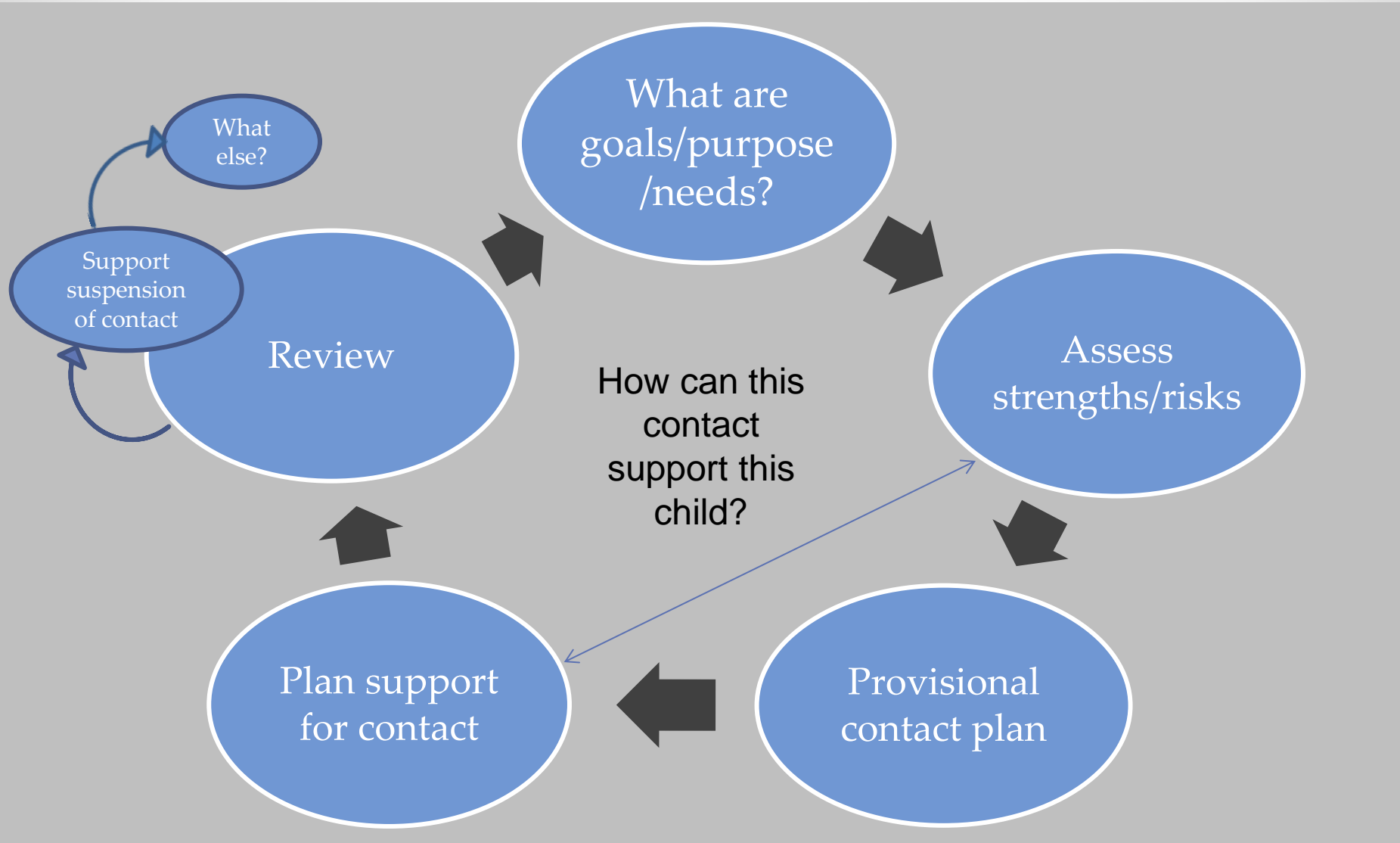
Birth Family

- Mitigating loss
- Anxieties
- Contributing to child's life

Factors Associated with Beneficial Contact



Summary: Planning and Supporting Contact



Dr Beth Neil

Centre for Research on Children & Families

School of Social Work

University of East Anglia

e.neil@uea.ac.uk

The 'Contact after Adoption' study

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/swp/research/centre/contactafteradoption>

'Helping Birth Families' and 'Supporting Direct

Contact after Adoption' studies

<http://www.adoptionresearchinitiative.org.uk/study5.html>